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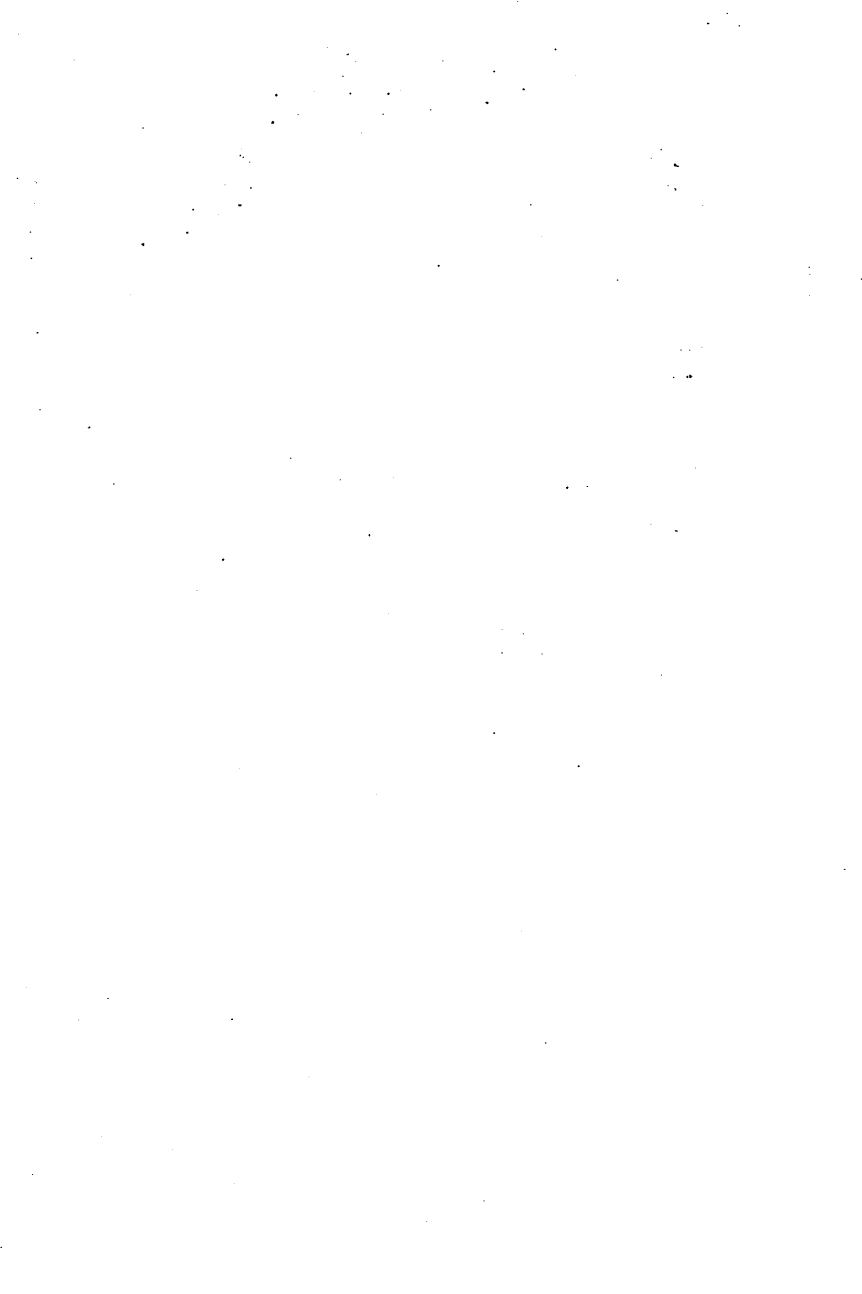
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THE
WORK of SALVATION:

A
SERMON,

DELIVERED IN THE COLLEGE CHAPEL,
MAY 17th, 1810.

BY THE REV. JOHN BROWN.
PROFESSOR OF LOGIC & MORAL PHILOSOPHY IN
THE SOUTH-CAROLINA COLLEGE.

*Lord, thou wilt ordain peace for us: for thou hast wrought all
our works in us.*

ISAIAH.

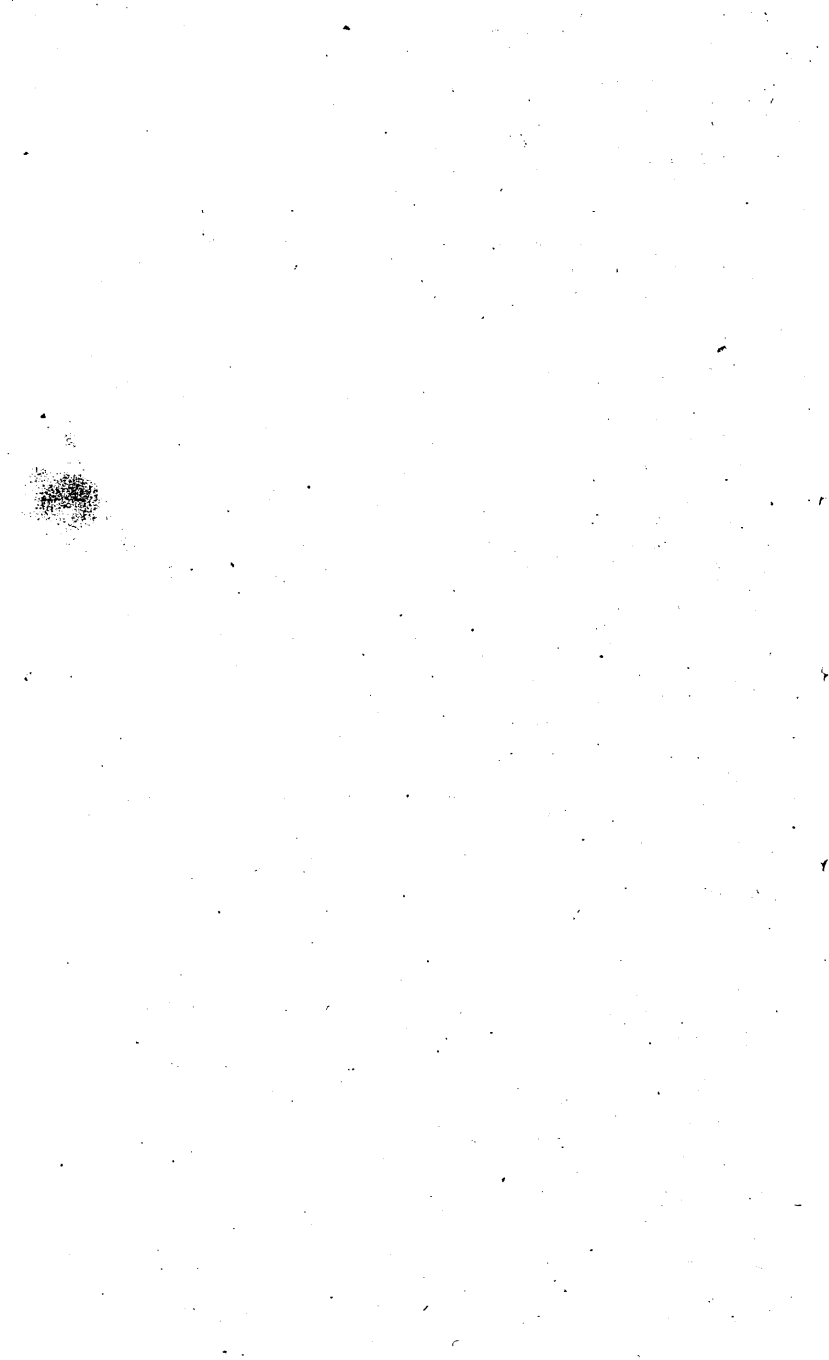
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VIA AIR
TO NEW YORK
IN 1961 10410

TO
THE YOUNG GENTLEMEN OF THE COLLEGE,
AT WHOSE REQUEST
THIS SERMON IS PUBLISHED,
IT IS VERY RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,
BY THEIR FRIEND,
THE AUTHOR.



A SERMON.

PHIL. II. 12, 13.

—Work out your own Salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

THE doctrine which arises from this text, has been the subject of much inquiry among divines, and the cause of much contention. The matters in dispute which have arisen from this and similar passages of scripture, are not yet settled: Nor do we expect a speedy agreement. Past experience, and the spirit of the present times, forbid this hope to rise. The subject is, however, of too much importance to be left entirely neglected. It is investigation that must, at last, bring us to the knowledge of the truth.

Contention is not my design; nor am I afraid that on this subject you will contend. My design is peace, and my object is to lead you to the practical use of a seeming paradox, which you will often meet with in Theological discussions.

This text contains three things—a duty prescribed—the manner of doing it—and a reason why you should attempt the performance. The duty prescribed is to work—the work to be performed is salvation—the salvation to be wrought out is your own. You are to work it out—to finish it to the end, and never give over until it is completed. The manner in which you are to perform the work is likewise noted—with fear and trembling—with anxious solicitude, lest you fail. Lastly, a very singular reason is given to induce you to undertake, and execute the work: For it is God that worketh in you, both to will, and to do of his good pleasure. You must work, for God worketh—worketh in you—both to will, and to do—moral, and natural ability—moral ability to will, and natural ability, to do.

Of his good pleasure; that is, it is his good pleasure that moves him to work in you, as he can have no higher motive. Or, he works in you will and ability to do his good pleasure. His pleasure is your salvation. God wills your salvation before you will it, and he works the will in you when you do will it. He works in you a disposition and ability to do your duty, or you never would do it—does every thing in you, and for you—is the author and finisher of your faith, which works by love. In short, God does all the work, and has all the praise of your salvation.

Now the question is, what can a person do, and what can he not do, in his own salvation? He must work it out, and God must work it in him. This seems a little paradoxical. The one must work, and so must the other. Both work, and both do all. They are not partners, but both prime agents. They do not work at separate parts, but each does the whole. Hence a very difficult question in divinity, What are the exact limits of human and divine agency in the work of salvation?

To this question I dare not promise you a satisfactory answer; but it is worth while to look around us, and come as near as we can to a determination of the difficulty. I wish to treat the subject in such a manner as to give no reasonable cause of displeasure, and, if possible, to do no harm.

The text which I have chosen is directly to my purpose; but it is not the only passage of scripture in which this seeming paradox is brought to view. There are many other parts of the sacred writings which convey ideas to the same effect. The Bible is full of this doctrine. Take a few examples.

The sinner is commanded to know God, and to consider his ways; but he is also said to be brutish, and have no understanding. Men are commanded to choose life, to repent, and believe; but faith is said to be the gift of God, and he is said to give repentance, and remission of sins. Christ complains of sinners, that they *will not* come to him; and also says that no man *can come* except the father draw him. It is en-

joined on us, that we keep God's commandments, and that we walk in his statutes and do them; but again God says, I will cause you to walk in my statutes, and to do them. David says of God, that with respect to sinners, his ears are open to their cry; but Solomon expressly says that God stops his ears at their cry. Ask and ye shall receive is the command, with its promise; but the declaration over against this is, that God heareth not sinners, and that the *sacrifice* of the wicked is an abomination. In fine, the command to exercise grace, and perform duty is universal; while salvation is represented as being entirely of God, and the wicked snared in the work of his own hands. Unless we have some right understanding of this matter, we shall go astray, as many have done, and are still continuing to do. Some would do all that is to be done, and God to them in the work of salvation is as nothing; while others wilfully neglect known duty, and do nothing, that God may be all in all. Now to reconcile such difficulties as these, and to keep clear of errors, is the point we would wish to attain. In this important business, may God direct us! With this in view, and to prepare the way for a practical improvement, I shall, first, lay down some opinions, or principles; and then examine these and such like seeming contrarieties, by those principles.

I. According to this distribution of the subject, I am, first, to lay down, or state to your consideration some opinions, or principles, by which I am afterwards to try those seeming contrarieties. I do not say contradictions. Truth cannot contradict itself.

It will best become the difficulty of this subject, and the weakness of my understanding to meet it, that I state what I have to say, in the humble form of queries.

In the business of salvation, may there not be certain opinions or principles to be believed and received concerning God? and certain opinions or principles to be believed and received concerning ourselves?

Concerning God. May not God be considered in three different relations respecting the salvation of men?

1. May he not be considered as God Absolute. In

the light of a creator and sovereign. In this light, perhaps, he appears to angels. And it may be that he appeared in this light to Adam before the fall. In this point of view, he is a holy God—a jealous God—a sin-revenging God—an unforgiving God—a God who will by no means clear the guilty. Thus Devils behold him and feel his wrath. In this character he asserts the rights of justice—maintains the honour of Deity—is a consuming fire—sinners cannot serve him. To this Absolute God, the cries of those who are recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, as pricked in their hearts, and crying, what shall we do to be saved—their cries, and the howling of Devils, is just exactly the same—the same as to either merit, or means of salvation. The dignity of Deity would be equally degraded by paying any compassionate regard to either the one or the other.

2. May not this same God be considered in another relation respecting the salvation of men? May he not be considered as God Mediatorial? The same God, but in a different relation—a different respect—a different personality if you please. In this point of view he is an Intercessor for sinners. He hears their cries when they are pricked to the heart. Draws them by his Spirit to himself, and brings them to God. This may be illustrated by a familiar similitude.

Suppose a king, a part of whose subjects have rebelled against him. He is an absolute sovereign, and he asserts the rights of sovereignty. He maintains the honour and dignity of his crown and kingdom. He sends out his armies. He commands his officers to subdue these rebels, and punish the guilty according to law. The young prince, his son, may intercede for them. It is no dishonour to the king that he hear his son interceding. Nay, he may appoint him an Intercessor. The son may exercise mediation without dishonour to himself or his father. He may go to him and to them. He may intercede between them, and bring about a reconciliation.

3. May not God be considered in another relation—as God Efficient?—as God conciliating sinners to

Christ? I know not by what phrase I shall best express the agency of the Spirit of God in the work of salvation. To return to our figure, may not a Harbinger be employed and commissioned, to go before the Prince, to aid and assist in the business?—to incline the minds of the rebels to peace—to conciliate their affections to the Prince, and to the king—to inform their minds in a knowledge of the terms of reconciliation with the sovereign—to let them see that the scheme of adjustment proposed to them is the only one that can be proposed—and that it is safe and honorable, as well as suitable for them. May he not do all this without lessening his dignity? And may he not do in this case, consistent with the dignity of his character and office, what neither the Prince nor his Father could do consistent with theirs?

Here let it be noted, that these opinions or principles imply nothing more or less than a belief in the three persons of the Holy Trinity. The application of these principles is the application of the doctrine of the Trinity to the general economy of salvation. Here we are considering these principles in a theological point of view, as they apply to the general theory of the Christian religion. Were we to pursue the subject, we would find them equally applicable to the moral and religious actions of men. The duties of the moral law, performed by the sinner, and addressed to God Absolute, is deistical morality. The same duties, addressed to God the Father—to the Sovereign of the universe, through the mediation of Jesus Christ, his Son, performed by a person who is drawn by the Holy Spirit, is the religious performance of the Christian.

May not these opinions or principles concerning God, lead to an equal number of opinions or principles concerning ourselves?

Concerning ourselves. May we not be considered in three different respects, as seeking salvation?

1. May there not be an attempt to approach an Absolute God? I say an *attempt*, for it can be only an attempt—God Absolute is not approachable but by ab-

solute perfection. The sinner cannot approach him—that is, he cannot make an immediate approach to him. God is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity.

It is, however, the natural disposition of man, to address God in this way—to address him as an Absolute God. It was the first way, and before the fall it was the only way. It was then the proper way: Now it is improper and impossible. Sinners have often tried this way. Every sinner under conviction tries it; and fails. He attempts. It is but an attempt. He can do no more. Sinners are like the Egyptians, who, when the land was famished cried to Pharaoh for bread, unwilling to go to Joseph, although they knew he was set over all the land of Egypt, and for this very purpose. What shall I do? says the sinner under conviction; what shall I personally do to be saved? What shall I do to God, that I may prevail with him to do good to me? And if by the immediate advice of a religious friend, or if in consequence of doctrinal information formerly received, he should for a moment think of Christ or the Holy Spirit of grace, his thoughts suddenly fly off, and still his language is, What shall I do? What shall I personally do? It is a most difficult thing to persuade him that he has nothing to do, and can do nothing: That is, with an Absolute God.

2. May there not be a coming to Christ, or an attempt to come to him, without the Spirit? Much emphasis, if I may so express it, seems to be laid on coming to Christ in the business of religion. Come to *me*, says Christ. Ye will not come unto *me*. No man can come unto *me*. Without *me* ye can do nothing—nothing with an Absolute God. No man can come unto me except the Father draw him, by the influence of the Holy Spirit. Now may there not be an incorrect and partial knowledge of the necessity of coming to Christ in order to come to the Father, without a suitable sense of the necessity of the operations of the Spirit? And may it not be an effort of this kind that our Lord had in view when he spoke of many who should seek to enter in at the strait gate, and not be able?

May there not be doctrinal information of the necessity of Christ as a Saviour, and the necessity of faith in Christ for salvation, and may not a person in this situation, try, and try again to believe, and perhaps think he does believe, and yet be destitute of true saving faith? Under religious impressions, as we usually term them, our first views of the scheme of salvation are generally very incorrect. First we think of God, (God Absolute,) then of Christ, and last of all, of the Spirit of Christ. What should be first and most in our thoughts, is least and last. This brings me to inquire,

3. May there not be a coming to the Spirit of God? Coming to him for light at least, if not for grace? Coming to Christ's Harbinger, without whose aid and assistance we cannot come to Christ. Is it not necessary in the business of salvation, that there should be a meeting between the sinner and the Spirit of God? Is not this the very first thing necessary? I need not bring quotations. It would be easy to prove that there must be not only a meeting, but a union between the soul to be saved, and the Spirit of God. It is well known that great stress is laid on this union in the scriptures, especially in the New Testament. Coming to an Absolute God, and appearing before him with acceptance, is necessary to our salvation; but an immediate address to him, is taking the third step in religion before we take the first. It is like the rebel coming to the King before he condescends to confer with the Prince. Attempting to believe, or trust in Christ without the Spirit, is like coming to the Prince without being introduced by his Harbinger.

II. Having laid down some opinions, or principles, as I proposed: I am now to examine the doctrine of my text, and such like seeming contrarieties, by those principles, and, if I can, to explain and reconcile them.

We are to work out our own salvation, and God must work in us. We must love God, and our hearts are enmity against him. We must serve God, and we cannot serve him, &c. All the paradoxes suggested in these and parallel passages of scripture, are rendered

perfectly intelligible by applying our principles, and enquiring what we cannot do with an Absolute God, and what we can do through the mediation of Christ, when we are duly influenced by the Holy Spirit.

I am aware that it may be here observed that the text is an address to the Philippians; who may be presumed to be already believers, and that the exhortation is to work out salvation already begun. That all, or most of the passages of scripture to which we have alluded, may be considered as addressed to persons of the same description. So that our principles, and the application of them, only go to shew, how the work of salvation, after it has been begun, is to be carried on in the best manner. It may be granted that the whole of our religious duties are voluntary exercises of our own rational intelligent minds; and are every way and entirely our own actions or works—that, however, the Spirit of God in some way or other, inclines us to, and disposes us for these duties—that Christ, then, by his intercession, procures for us the acceptance of our persons with God the Father. Thus it becomes reasonable and proper to exhort a person in this situation, to work out his own salvation, already begun, for God worketh in him. But all this, it may be said, respects the person who has the Spirit of God. It may be, therefore, thought desirable that we should go further back with our inquiry, so as to take in the situation of the sinner before he has become a subject of the Spirit's operations, for still it may be said, this difficult question recurs :

If grace and salvation be all from God, and guilt and damnation from the sinner himself, What is it that renders the sinner guilty?—the sinner who has not the Spirit. Is there any thing in his power, the neglect of which is sufficient to incur his guilt and damnation? And if so; What is it, or how far does this power extend? And on the other hand, What is that which is out of his power, and must be done by God, so much to magnify his grace, and to secure the praise, the whole praise of the sinner's salvation? The great difficulty is now immediately before us, and if we err here,

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The principles already laid down, we trust are correct. Let us keep them steadily in view. From these principles, and, I believe, from the whole concurring testimony of scripture, it evidently appears, that the very first thing to be sought for in religion, is the influence, or, if you please, the illumination of the Holy Spirit of God. Now the question is, can the sinner do any thing; and if any thing, what can he do to obtain this spiritual influence, whatever it may be ?

Now it would be doing ample justice to the question on both sides to say, Let us take a young person of moderately good understanding, and no peculiarly depraved habits. Let us fairly state to his understanding the doctrines of religion, and the scheme of salvation. Let us point out to him the duties, and earnestly press them on his heart. Let us particularly state to him the necessity of his seeking and being made the subject of certain operations of the Spirit of God. Now I might ask, What can this person do, to obtain the Spirit ? Can he seek ? Can he seek earnestly ?—with all the sincerity of a natural mind ? Can he ask constantly, i. e. at stated times ? Can he seek perseveringly, i. e. until he obtain, or to the end of life ? And if he should do so, Would this seeking be a means of his obtaining the end proposed—the salvation of his soul ?

But to give every possible advantage to the other side of the question, Let us take a very aged, and a very wicked person. Let Jude the servant of God describe him. Let him be one who has *separated* himself from the people and service of God, who is *sensual, having not the Spirit*. Let him be far gone in habits of wickedness. Let him be so accustomed to do evil, that the Ethiopian might as easily change his skin or the Leopard his spots, as that he should learn to do good. In short let him be as bad, and as wicked as he can be, only let him not be entirely given over by the good

Spirit of God, nor have committed the unpardonable sin, that sin against the Holy Ghost, that hath never forgiveness. With regard to this aged, and confirmed sinner, I beg leave to ask the following questions :

1. Are there any means, which are within his reach, which it is his duty to use, and in the use of which he may yet hope the Spirit of God is by him attainable ?

2. If so, what can he do to attain the Spirit's operations ?

3. Are these operations, when attained, retainable ?

4. What can he do to retain them ?

5. Will the Spirit retained, bring him to Christ ?

6. Will Christ cast him out ? Or,

7. Will Christ bring him to, and intercede for him with God the Father ?

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For, (1st.) The promise of God, or overture, as some would choose to call it, is directly to this effect. Prov. 1, 23, *Turn ye at my reproof: behold I will pour out my Spirit unto you.* These are *simple ones, scorers and fools*, to whom this overture is made ; they have not the Spirit, for the Spirit is the thing promised, or proposed to be given. Turn ye, is the term, and I will, &c. is the promise. Turning is the mean, and attaining the Spirit, is the end.

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(4.) If it be granted, as I presume it will, that Christ and the Holy Spirit often intercede and operate unasked, I cannot conceive how it would degrade them to do so when asked, nor can I conceive how asking should disqualify the sinner to receive. The truth is that the sinner may ask, and asking is the way to receive; and he has reason to hope that asking he shall receive. He has reason to hope the Spirit is attainable. Our next question is,

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soul is such that no sinner is ever, of himself, willing to turn to God : And indeed, that no train of rational arguments, addressed to his understanding, by man only, will ever prevail with him—that like Adam in the garden after the fall, he is afraid, and would hide himself, until encouraged by divine grace, and drawn by the Spirit.

Some men, by a strange kind of Logic which I am utterly unable to understand, seem to have reasoned themselves into an opinion that the idea of this perverseness of will, which is so obstinate as to be overcome by nothing but the Almighty power of God, almost if not altogether destroys the idea of human guilt. They seem to imagine that if his rebellion of mind, and enmity of heart against God, be so very great, he *cannot help it*, and so it ceases to be a crime. That he *cannot help it* is no otherwise true, than because he will not : And it is to me inconceivable how enmity can rise so high as to cease to be enmity—a crime so great as to be no crime. Could we do away the criminality of sins by indulgence in them to the utmost excess, we should have a ready way to pardon indeed. But the truth is, that the more we hate God and holiness, the greater is our sin, in doing so. And this doctrine, that the enmity of the sinner is so great that nothing but divine power can overcome it, and also that divine power often does overcome this obstinacy, and always does so when a sinner is converted, is going the last step that can be gone towards magnifying the grace of God, and the guilt of the sinner, and is far from diminishing either.

Some objectors to this doctrine of efficacious grace have been disposed to doubt whether this be according to experience. They tell us that they were not sensible of any overpowering constraining influence of the Spirit of God at the time of their conversion. But it is to be remembered, that the influence of the Spirit of God is not of such a nature, as to cause the mind to feel any painful constraint. The saints are made a willing people, and the love of Christ constrains them. The sweet and pleasant restraints of grace are very dif-

ferent from what these objectors would seem to imagine. Faith works by love, and the new obedience of the saint, is as cheerful and willing obedience as was ever performed. I would wish to know how an objector will prove that the Spirit of God had nothing to do with the first good inclinations of his will. I would also ask him what it was of human wisdom, or force of reasoning, that prevailed with him when he was converted—whether he had not heard the same gospel preached, and the same arguments offered why he should embrace it on some former occasion—and, if so, why he did not repent and believe on a former occasion. In fact we shall most easily understand, and most readily account for that success which we see the gospel actually has, by ascribing it to power supernatural and divine.

Some tell us that if they thought men would not yield to persuasions as offered them by men, but that the success of the gospel were thus dependant on divine power, they would immediately give over the preaching of the gospel, as inefficacious, and useless. The effect however of this opinion is very different with me, and I candidly acknowledge that if I thought the success depended entirely on my power and skill to persuade men to believe, that preaching would be to me a dull and hopeless business. Conceiving of the human mind as I do, I should promise myself but few stars in my crown of rejoicing: But believing that there is an efficacious agency of the Spirit of God accompanying the word, and making it effectual: And trusting in the last kind promise of the glorious Redeemer, that he will be with his ministering servants always, even to the end of the world, and, as I trust, to give success to their ministrations, I feel strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, and hope to be instrumental in breaking down strong holds. One may plant and another water, but it is God that giveth the increase.

Neglecting the means of grace, as some men profess to do for the same reason, viz. that salvation is all of grace, has to me the appearance of guarding against di-

vine influence, lest God should meet with them and bless them in his own appointed way, that is, in the use of means; but the impropriety of this reasoning will appear still more evident when we return to our subject, and enquire,

at- What can the sinner do—this most hardened and obdurate sinner, to obtain the Spirit's operations?

Here let it not be forgotten, that we are speaking, not of merit, but of means,—and these means, not to purchase salvation, but to procure salvation already purchased.

Now I ask, can he exercise his rational powers on religion? Can he consider his ways? Can he consider the difference of state and character there is between the good and the bad man, in his life, in his death, and in his latter end? Can he consider and know any thing of God's will, and his own duty as pointed out in the scriptures?—and what is the extent of his natural power with regard to duty when known? Can he change his company, and his course? Can he withdraw from the card-table, the horse-race, and the tavern? Can he read the scriptures, say the Lord's prayer, and go to church on the next sabbath day? Can he persist in these things until he shall have acquired the habit of serious thought? Or is all this naturally impossible, or so far out of his power that it would be wrong, or at least folly to try? But you say what will all this avail him, while his heart is hard, his prayer sin, and his motives selfish? I answer it will avail him nothing with an Absolute God, and if addressed as duty to an Absolute God, without any regard to the gospel dispensation, will only serve to torment his own mind. But if all that he can do, be done in moral sincerity, will it not avail him as means for attaining the operations of the Spirit? I think it will. I think it certainly will: For I see nothing in heaven or on earth to prevent a meeting between the sinner and the Spirit of God but his own unwillingness. I say then that if he *will* he can do all that is necessary to be done as means to bring about this meeting. He can ask and he shall receive. He can seek and he shall

find. If not, I do not perceive how the declarations of heaven will be made good to him. Now if he *can*, and *will not*, the blame and crime are entirely his own. Our next question is,

3. Can the Spirit be retained? To this I answer by asking,

(1.) If the Spirit be attainable by means, why not retainable by the same means?

(2.) If after a meeting there should be a departure, there must be some cause. Will any one suppose the cause will be on the part of the divine Spirit? Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, said the prophet.

(3.) Men are charged with resisting the Spirit of God, and commanded not to grieve the Spirit. This charge, and command go on the supposition, that we can resist and grieve, and implies that we can refrain from resisting and grieving him. Then I ask,

4. What can the sinner do to retain the good Spirit of God?

(1.) Whatever he could do to attain, he can now, much more, do to retain the Spirit. He can read, hear, and pray, &c. and whatever he has reason to believe will be pleasing to the Spirit.

(2.) He can endeavour to abstain from what might grieve the Spirit. He can declare against lust, drink, pleasure, passion, malice, revenge, &c.

5. Will the Spirit bring him to Christ?

To this I answer, by observing, that it is his office, and he will not be deficient. I need not bring proof.

Here let us pause a moment, and consider, Will not this establish a connexion between our endeavours and salvation? I answer, Not such a connexion as will rob God of any part of the glory of our salvation. We have said nothing about merit—nothing about the covenant of redemption. We have established no natural connexion whatever—no other than what depends on the promise and good pleasure of God. And as to the event, we have not even rested this on the use of means, and the divine promise of a blessing from God,

but, on the supernatural agency of the Spirit, disposing the sinner to use the means aright. So that I hope we have laid no foundation for a wrong impression on your minds with respect to works. And I beg leave further to observe that if we have even established a possible connexion, the probability of salvation so far as it rests on this connexion, would be very small. Think of the enmity which yet remains in the heart of this sinner—that his heart is yet deceitful, and desperately wicked—that the number and power of those who are enemies to the progress of the work are very great—that those enemies are artful and cunning, and long experienced in the arts of deceit. Consider also the many worldly pleasures, and allurements which await him, and his taste for them. In short if you consider the whole of this work, and his strength, and the exceeding improbability that he will exercise the strength he has, you will find his salvation very hopeless unless you can find some way to rest it in the hands of a God.

6. Our next question is, Will Christ cast him out? And to this I answer, No—he will in no wise cast him out.

7. Will Christ bring him to God?

It is the design of his incarnation—of all his offices—of his death—resurrection, and the whole of the gospel economy which he has established. Christ will bring him to God. There is no power in heaven, earth, or hell to prevent it.

8. Will God the Father accept him for Christ's sake? This is beyond a doubt. Christ has not died in vain. He shall see the travail of his soul and be satisfied. He pleads for the sinner. We have an Advocate with the Father. Our Advocate does not plead in vain. Here is merit, not means. In this stage of the work it does not, cannot fail. God is faithful. Glory be to his dear name!

9. Will he then be finally saved? Accepted in the beloved—God well pleased with him for Christ's sake—the law of God magnified and made honourable. The pillars of the earth may tremble, and the foundati-

ons thereof fail; but the strong foundation of the saint's hope shall never be moved, till death be swallowed up in victory, faith in vision, and hope in enjoyment.

Hence we have in regular train, and I believe, in strict conformity with the commonly received opinions respecting the leading principles of our religion, a solution to many seeming contrarieties, and paradoxical passages in the Bible. And the result is, that we can of ourselves, either before or after conversion, *do nothing* with an Absolute God. To make a successfull approach to him, we must be holy, as he is holy—and perfect as he is perfect; but that through Christ, strengthening us by his Holy Spirit, we can *do all things* necessarily pertaining to spiritual life, and godliness.

Hence we have also, a solution, and I trust, a true and correct solution, to a very important and difficult question in divinity, viz. What can a person do, and what can he not do, in the work of his own salvation? Or, what are the limits and extent of human and divine agency in that work? And the solution is, that a person, and even the chief of sinners, can exercise his natural powers in the use of means of divine appointment, and that if he really *will do* all that he ought to do and can do, he will certainly attain the salvation of his soul. That the enmity of the heart of the sinner is such, however, that no man *will do* this; unless inclined, and drawn by the mighty power and grace of God: And further, that even the saint during the whole progress of the work, through the remaining corruptions of his nature, and the influence of manifold temptations, would every moment fly off from God and his duty, unless he were kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. By grace he stands. So that by fair deduction, salvation is of grace—all of grace. Christ is all in all—the author and finisher. For he has not only magnified the law, and wrought out salvation *for us*; but by his Spirit he begins, and by grace carries on, and works salvation *in us*, O my soul, shall he not have the praise, the whole praise! The blessed employment of a blessed eternity will be to give him the praise!

Bless the Lord, O my soul ! Praise him all ye people !
Let the ends of the earth praise him, and the skies re-
sound his praise !

This doctrine will afford us several considerations useful for information, and for exhortation.

Information. 1. This will in some degree elucidate the doctrine of the Trinity. For our knowledge of this doctrine we are altogether indebted to revelation, and from revelation we know very little concerning the Trinity, except as it respects the work of salvation. Whatever elucidates this mystery, and shews its connexion with salvation, tends to strengthen and confirm our faith in the truth of our holy religion. From the principles laid down, and our application of them, we see a beautiful correspondence between this doctrine, and the salvation of a sinner. God the Father vindicates and maintains the rights of sovereignty, and the honour of his law—is holy, just and true, and will by no means clear the guilty. God the Son magnifies the law and makes it honourable—appeases the just wrath of his Father—makes a complete atonement, and intercedes for sinners : Not in vain. The Holy Spirit calls, enlightens, persuades, and enables us—draws us to Christ, and carries us through the work by his power and grace. The whole scheme is wise and consistent : God is honoured and man is saved.

2. This may serve to inform us why the ordinance of baptism, which we receive as the badge of our Christian profession and sign of initiation into the membership of the gospel church, is to be administered in the names of each of the three persons of the Trinity, and not in the name of the one true God. This ordinance is not intended as an expression of our acknowledged subjection to an Absolute God ; but of our hope of salvation according to the plan of the gospel, and our acknowledged approbation of that glorious plan—of our belief of the doctrine of the Trinity, and the use of that doctrine respecting salvation.

3. The doctrine stated in this discourse will assist us in the explanation of a number of passages of scripture,

and especially that remarkable text 1 Tim. IV. 10, Where the apostle informs us that Christ is the Saviour of all men, especially of them that believe. The possible salvation of all who will believe, and the special salvation of all who do believe, is fairly deducible from the doctrine we have attempted to establish: And it seems not very easy to learn in what other sense it is, that Christ is sometimes represented as being the Saviour of all men, and again as being the Saviour of his body only, the church.

4. If what we have stated be correct, it is no longer a matter of difficulty to reconcile Christ's invitation, *come unto me*, with his declarations, *ye cannot and will not come*. The invitation is to all, and all should come to him. Men cannot come to an Absolute God without Christ, nor to Christ without the Spirit; and will not come to either unless drawn by the Spirit.

5. This doctrine will also assist us in explaining a very difficult passage in 1 Cor. XV. 24, Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father, (and v. 28,) that God may be all in all. Christ is now indeed a Mediatorial Intercessor. He is also a King. He is King in Zion—king in his church. He has by covenant agreement with his Father, the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession. A willing people shall come to him, and the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord. But his kingdom is not of this world; it is a Mediatorial kingdom. When he has executed his Mediatorial Office, which will not be completed till after the resurrection and general judgment, then will he deliver up the Mediatorial kingdom to the Father, that God may be all in all. Then will God again be addressed as God Absolute—as he is now addressed by angels—as he was by Adam before the fall—as, by the original constitution of nature, men still incline to address him. Now, indeed it is, for us improper, and impossible: Then, when Christ shall have delivered up the kingdom, it will again be right, and God Absolute will be all in all.

6. Our doctrine also goes to shew the eternally lost and hopeless situation of Devils, who have no Mediator, and cannot have access to an Absolute God—and will equally shew the lost and ruined situation of those men who at the day of judgment shall be found not the subjects of Christ's Mediatorial kingdom. When Christ shall have delivered up his kingdom, there will remain for them, no more sacrifice for sins, but the fiery indignation of an Absolute God which shall destroy the adversaries.

7. This doctrine likewise shews us in a plain, easy, and beautiful manner, why it is that God honours his own ordinances, as he does, in the work of salvation. These are appropriate instruments in the hand of the Spirit, by which he begins and carries on the work, and in such a way that every mouth may be stopped, and all the finally impenitent world become doubly guilty before God—guilty not only of breaking his law, but also of rejecting his gospel: While God has all the praise of the salvation of them that believe.

8. From this doctrine we also learn how it is, that the rejection of the gospel is the principal circumstance of the sinner's condemnation, and how unbelief may be charged to the sinner, so as to become his condemning crime, and explains that passage, John III. 17, 18, 19, Christ came not to condemn them; but they love darkness and choose it, and this choice fixes their condemnation.

9. This subject as we have treated it, may also serve to remove much of that veil of mystery; which has been supposed to hang over the doctrine of election, in the opinion of many who profess to believe it. It may likewise remove in some measure, if not entirely, the charge of absurdity and inconsistency which has been brought against that doctrine, by those who deny it. If salvation be really attainable, and within the reach of all, and all reject it; if out of these rejectors, it should be the pleasure of the Almighty to make *some* the trophies of his grace, and pass by the rest, where is the absurdity in all this? Or indeed the difficulty of under-

standing it? Does not this agree with the apostle's doctrine of election? Is God unrighteous if he should in this way have mercy on whom he will, and pass by the rest to be hardened by the very means of grace that ought to soften them? I think not. And I further think whenever the plain doctrines of the gospel come to be simply expressed and clearly understood, much will be done toward reconciling many of the seeming and real differences between the Arminians and Calvinists of this country.

10. I conclude this part of the discourse with an observation, deducible from the doctrine laid down, which I conceive to be of great importance: And that is, that all the power of the sinner or of the saint in the work of salvation is indirect. He can of himself do *nothing*; but let him enjoy the immediate gift and grace of God, and he can, with Paul, do *all things*.

I have now only to say a few things by way of exhortation to saints and sinners.

Saints, Think of what you were, of what you are, and of what you shall be, and praise God. O praise him! Give him all the praise! Is it not his due? Yes verily, For where wast thou, when grace and mercy found thee? Lost, ruined, and undone! Under the curse of a broken covenant, exposed to its dreadful penalty, and dead in trespasses and in sins. Thou wast in thy blood—no eye to pity, or arm to save! But O the love—the boundless love—everlasting love, and grace, and mercy of a God! Now thou art encircled in the arms of a Redeemer!—a God!—one able and mighty to save! Bless and praise him through life, and with thy latest breath. Soon thou shalt walk the golden streets, have immediate access to an Absolute God, and enjoy all that felicity which his presence can give, or his right hand bestow.

But what hast thou done for all this, or in all this glorious work? Where wast thou when the strong foundations of the city of refuge were laid? Did thy feeble arm raise the massy pillars thereof? Who devised the plan, and executed the work? Was it not him whose ways are everlasting?

Whose was the blood that made atonement for thy smallest sin, or washed away the slightest stain? Was it thine, or the blood of the covenant?

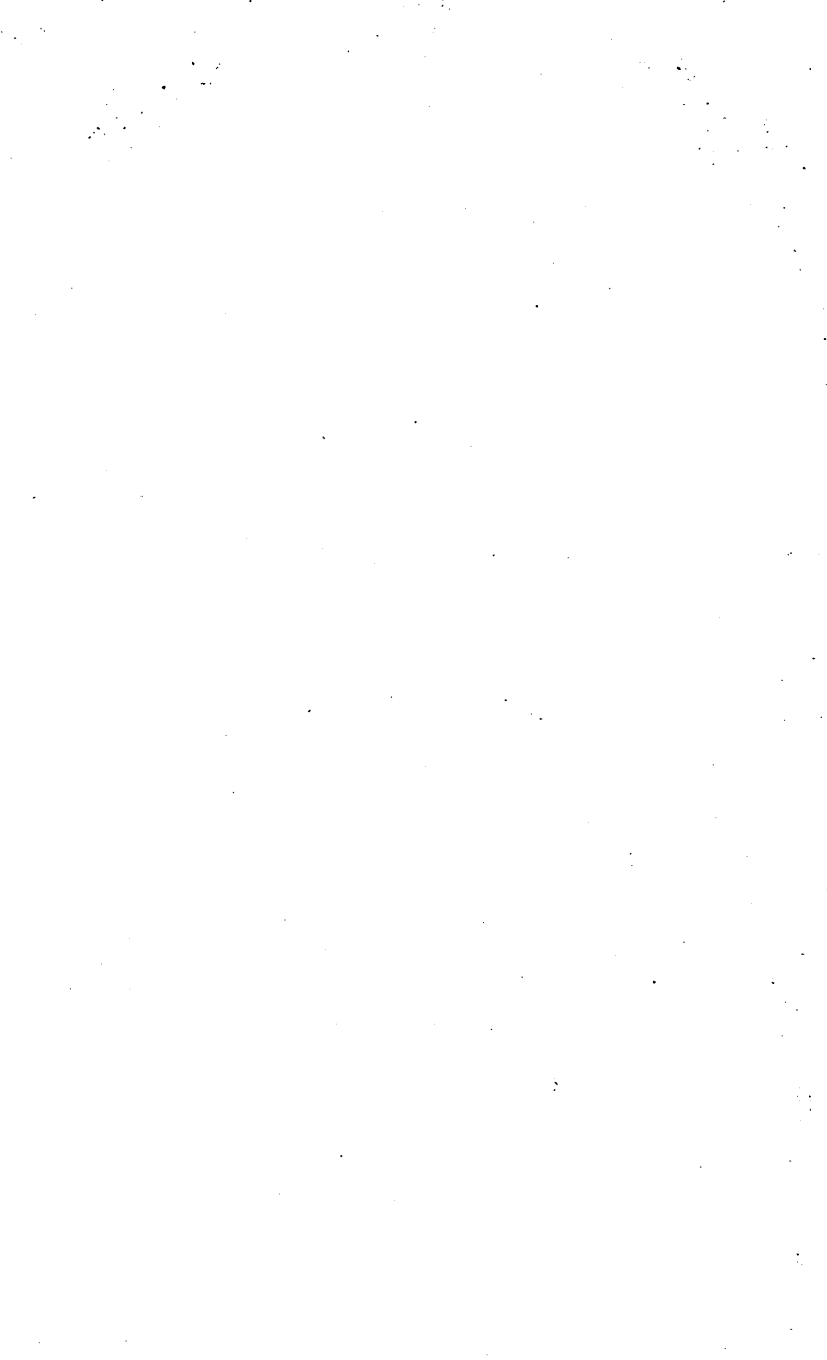
Or again, What lust hast thou subdued, or what grace hast thou implanted in thine own heart? In all this, what has thy merit purchased or thy power affected? Nothing! absolutely nothing: for nothing couldst thou effect. As well mightest thou have heaved the mountains from their bases, drunk the ocean dry, or created a world!

But again, How didst thou attain this grace wherein thou standest? How wast thou let into the ark of the covenant, and thus restored to favour? The terms were easy and generous—only look and live—believe and be saved—saved by grace, through faith, and that, the gift of God. Wonderful work of unmerited mercy and boundless grace! Let the saints be humble and thankful, and let God be praised.

Sinners, Think of your danger, your duty, and your remedy, and seek salvation.

Your danger is great. You have broken covenant with the Omnipotent God. He will by no means clear the guilty. You cannot fly from him: You cannot resist him: And you cannot approach him. Your case is dangerous, and, unless you find a Mediator, and Intercessor, it is not only hopeless—it is desperate—absolutely desperate. But there is a remedy provided—a Mediator offered—an intercessor ready—one every way suited to all the necessities of your case. Then, think of your duty. Fly! and fly immediately to the hope set before you. To day if ye will hear his voice harden not your hearts. Now is the accepted time. Tarry not a moment, lest vengeance overtake you, and you sink into ruin. When you feel your danger, think of your remedy. Christ is a glorious remedy. He is offered fully. He is offered freely. He is offered to all. This offer is not solemn mockery, but a serious offer. May the Spirit of God bring you to accept it! Amen!





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